

1810

Congregational Church

Bradford, Vermont

1910



REV. SILAS MCKEEN
Pastor For Forty-Three Years

CENTENNIAL SERMON

DELIVERED BY

REV. HENRY J. KILBOURN

UPON THE

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN

BRADFORD, VT., JUNE 24, 1910

Scripture Title: Deut. 8:2, "Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee."

Brethren and Fathers, People of God:

"A century! It is a little span
Among the huddling years which, wave
on wave,
Break on this promontory of life and pave
The sand with glistening pebbles, which
we scan
One moment ere the reflux billows
seize
Their own again and drag them to the
deep.

"A hundred years!—It is a long, long time,
Measured as we faint mortals count the
days,
But the Immortal Mother sees the prime.
Just reddening o'er the eastern hill,
Her gaze
Is fixt upon the eternal morning breaking
On new horizons still."

John, the Revelator, standing in the very gates of the Holy City, proclaims the last great invitation of God to men: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." The Bride was the Church. She has long since become the Immortal Mother of our human lives, naming us in baptism, crowning us in marriage, patiently teaching us the way of righteousness; in death singing to us a last

tender and solemn lullaby of the redeeming power of Jesus—and then pointing us where her own gaze

"Is fixed upon the eternal morning,
breaking
On new horizons still."

If a man could look into the faces of the living pastors of this church, feel, as I do at this hour, the spiritual presence of the pastors who are in eternity, see the radiant, mingled vision of the fathers and mothers of this town whom you have loved long since—with this throng of the present generation—bidding him to draw back the veil and disclose the panorama of a church's toil and achievements, and the transforming work of Christ in this town for a hundred years and not be thrilled by the task—he would be common clay indeed.

But you must remember one thing, that the chief part of this century story is beyond the pen. Back of every outward turn, every new beginning of the church was a larger inward drama of souls trying to walk with God, of failures and

fresh efforts, of many little unseen gardens where faith grew, of deadly hand-to-hand fighting in the street of Mansoul and—I open the door to a holy place, brothers—nights which your pastors have spent by the brook Jabbok, and nights under the bitter but healing trees of Gethsemane. How else could we have been pastors? This is a suggestion of the inner history of the Congregational church in Bradford. It reaches highest heaven and to deepest hades. No man is found worthy or able here to break the seal of that record, but it is all written, to the last heart-throb, in the never-crumbling, the wholly merciful archives of God.

But the soul of the church has created an outer century of history in the moral, the intellectual, the business and social life of this community, and I answer your call to tell that story as it appears to one who loves the church and believes in her.

The historian Plutarch, of the first Christian century, wrote the lives of Greek and Roman heroes in 46 volumes; besides these over 30 other treatises on all imaginable themes, from "Should a man engage in Politics when he is no Longer Young?" to "Advice to the Married" and "Whether Land Animals or Water Animals are the more Clever." He is as vast a conversationalist as Solomon—and Roosevelt! The world of striving men today, however, is largely oblivious of all he said. But in one short utterance Plutarch rises into the sky, looks down on the whole scene of human life, and speaks. This paragraph will outlive all the other labor of his years in its influence on men:

"If you travel through the world well you shall find cities without walls, without literature, without

kings, moneyless and such as desire no coin; which know not what theatres or public halls of bodily exercise mean, but never was there nor ever shall there be, any one city seen without temple, church or chapel. Nay, methinks a man should sooner find a city built in the air, without any plot of ground whereon it is seated than that any commonwealth altogether void of religion should either be first established or afterward maintained and preserved in that estate. This is that containeth and holdeth together all human society; this is the foundation, stay and prop of all."

The same elemental impulse which moves men to make homes, to till ground and women to rock cradles moves every community sooner or later to set apart a common place for prayer, the reading of the sacred book, and out of that book to proclaim the moral ideals for the community. How this human need of worship first showed itself in the eighteenth century town which first appeared on this river-bank can only be told adequately by viewing the larger movement of which it was a part. A frequent order of town-building seems to have been first, public defense; then, public order; then public worship; then, public education. Worship and education were generally hastened as soon as defense and order were insured. This was because the Saxon mind at its best, in its pioneer state-builders, knows with Plutarch that the public worship is the bulwark of the public defense, education, order, justice—"the foundation, stay and prop of all."

As we look at the men of eighteenth century Mooretown (common-place word which the Revolution

shook off and changed for the splendid historic name "Bradford"), we must remember that they had to be experimenters, the just and independent systems of worship and government to which we are born were two centuries in the future.

The first ripple of the rising Saxon sea which pushed its way into this upper Connecticut Valley was the arrival of Lieut. Timothy Dwight with a company of Massachusetts soldiers on the Dummerston meadow, and the beginning of their block-house on February 3, 1724. They brought a preacher. Town after town was surveyed from the river bank back into the forest. Each town had its church. Each church logically brought with it the ecclesiastical methods of Massachusetts Bay Colony. There, originally, none but church members were citizens, so that the town meetings were simply church meetings in another form, and the "General Court" was a mass meeting of the delegates from the churches. A few years more and the churches were expressly authorized to assess and collect church dues like other taxes. After 1665, while other than church members were admitted to citizenship, yet the entire town was still taxed for the support of the minister, and the Congregational church was practically everywhere what Winston Churchill in "Coniston" dryly calls it, "the established church."

It was not until 1833 that an act was passed severing all connection between the state and the church. This makes clear the first conditions under which worship was established in the town of Bradford, Vt. The first organization for worship of which any definite record appears is a vote of the town in 1782 to

raise £20 to pay "town charges" for preaching, and the appointment of a committee of three citizens "to procure preaching," followed by a vote on April 2 of the same year "to hire Mr. Steward or Mr. Store to preach with us two or three months this summer." These were Congregational ministers. As far as any creed or church rules (if any existed) are concerned, they are completely nebulous. It looks probable that the personality of the minister was both creed and church government. But as the town pastor who stayed longest, Mr. Kellogg, (serving fourteen years) was ordained by a council of Congregational ministers of the vicinage, as the town church was a natural continuation of the Congregational system in Massachusetts, and as an evident majority of the citizens favored Congregational preaching, it is clear that such denominational character as the town church possessed was Congregational.

But the Congregational stars of democracy and fair play, in their courses, fought against the town church idea. How could much spiritual blessing come when all were taxed for the religious opinion even of a majority? We can only regret that the better way of supporting each church by the love and gifts of its own, was not adopted by all until twenty-eight years after the founding of the town church. Yet, on the other hand, how can we help but honor those men and women for the patient, though difficult way in which they felt after God. They had the same Bible, the same Christ, and the memory of their faithfulness is all we ought to cherish.

I would deny you and myself a large pleasure if I did not make such swift mention as these moments

will permit, of the other groups of our fellow Christians who have established churches in Bradford.

In 1790 a church was built near the cemetery by Baptist people from five neighboring towns including Bradford. They came long distances, and for the privilege of their worship were required to file with the town clerk the following certificate: "I do not agree in religious opinion with a majority of the inhabitants of this town."

(Signed) "

This statement, it should be said, was sufficient at any time to release one from paying taxes in support of the town church. Local churches, arising in the five towns above mentioned, finally drew off the Baptist constituency from this earliest edifice on the upper plain, and it disappeared.

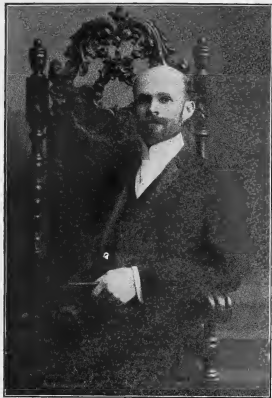
Next in order of edifices comes the building of that for the town church, in 1795. This was located on the upper plain a little north of the present home of Arthur W. Peters. The contract, I note, binds Joseph and Edward Clark, of Haverhill, to erect a house of worship, with all due specification for porch, steeple, and weather-vane, and particularly and distinctly to make the edifice in every respect equal to the church in Newbury!

Then the Methodist Episcopal Church of Bradford was formed in 1798 and shows a list of thirty members in 1800. Among the founders of all that is noble in Bradford may well be mentioned Mrs. Margaret Peckett, who had been a member of the family of John Wesley, and in whose home on the lower plain the Methodist church was organized. Its edifice has now become our close neighbor, its pastors are our trusted friends, its

people intermingling with ours in union services many times every year. The Methodist Episcopal church in Bradford has the splendid record of producing twenty-two young men for the Christian ministry.

About 1833 was erected the Goshen church building by the Baptist Society of Bradford, formed in 1805. The West Bradford Methodist church was formed in 1841, and the latest addition to the church forces is the Christian Science church, formed in 1909.

Now I open the venerable record book of the church whose birthday we celebrate. As we gaze on its opening leaf, a vision rises before us: Here they come, up to the house of God, on the beautiful last Sunday in June, 1810, Joseph Clark. Sarah Clark, Daniel Moore, Anna Moore, Eupheme Moore, Pamela Kidder and Deborah White. Their clerk writes, "the (town) church in Bradford, being in a deranged, broken and disunited state, professed to feel the importance of getting into a regular state, in which they might exercise Christian faithfulness towards one another, and instead of darkness, hold up light to the world." With all the reproaches and broken pieces of a church failure lying around them, but with the spirit of the early Christians, of John Robinson and the Plymouth pilgrimage flashing in their eyes, they vote to end the old town church regime. Then they put their signatures to the long creed of twenty-three articles and to the covenant, taking for a name "The Calvinistic Congregational Church of Christ in Bradford." Those articles of faith were built of the best theological oak of that day. "We believe that Adam acted as the federal head for all his posterity, and



REV. H. J. KILBOURN

Who Delivered the Historical Address

that***allare born into the world in a state of total moral depravity;" "We believe that God did from eternity choose a certain particular number of the human race to life everlasting." These are phrases which can bring but a smile to the average Christian today. They remind us of grim old discussions on the doctrine of election, and of a question sometimes put to candidates for church membership:

"Would you be willing to be damned for the glory of God?" to which one candidate is said to have replied, "No, but I am perfectly willing that the committee should be if necessary."

But listen again: "We believe that Jesus Christ****is the only way of life, and that he has made**a most ample atonement for sin, by which Godcan***pardon and save all who repent and believe;" "We believe that the Bible is a divine revelation; that all the books of the Old and New Testaments were given by the inspiration of God, and contain a perfect rule of faith and practice, and that no other writings ought to be received as divine revelation;" "We believe that public worship is a divine institution, that we are bound to devote one-seventh part of our time, one day in every seven, to the special worship of God, and that the first day of the week ought to be kept as holy time;" "We believe there will be a day of judgment, in which all the human race will appear before the bar of God; and every person will have all his thoughts and actions brought into the light and be judged according to the deeds done in the body." Pray God that while Bradford stands its people shall not believe less!

O, little company of seven, standing upon the Rock of Ages at the

farther shore of the century, the Cross by which you stood glorifies you. Your faith justifies you. The grave cannot hold you. Hear, while the community of Bradford rises up to call you blessed.

Clouds and darkness were often round about the new church. No easy sailing was theirs. For four years they had still to depend upon the occasional advent of travelling preachers, and even these could only be obtained with sacrifices that were real.

This was a stirring time also for the little American nation. James Madison was being crowded by events and the voice of the people to draw the sword against the British Empire in the War of 1812. Men were called from the plow to man "Old Ironsides," to watch behind the ramparts of Plattsburg and to pay war taxes. The spirit of daring was in the air. Across the sea Napoleon was making that astonishing progress of his from Elba to Paris, and Europe was preparing to unite against him as "the General Enemy and Disturber of the World."

In Bradford, Massachusetts, just four days after the founding of our church, without cannon or excitement, young Samuel J. Mills, Adoniram Judson, Samuel Newell and Samuel Nott, in the intense spiritual fire of a new purpose which had swallowed up their lives, appeared before the Massachusetts General Association with their immortal plea to be sent by the churches as messengers of Christ to foreign nations, with the result that, on the following day was formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, an act, with which, in its uplifting power on human civilization the battle of Plattsburg, the victory of the "Constitution," even

Waterloo, are not to be compared, for these four young men were the first engineers of the missionary army which now is recruiting the students of our land by hundreds. These four were they who struck the first far-off signals for the Awakening of China, the miracle of Japan's leap to power and the Turkish revolution of 1909.

"We are living, we are dwelling
In a grand and awful time"

The church in Bradford must have sung with emotion,

"In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime."

Turning again to our seven, now increased to thirteen, we see entering their pulpit in 1814 a keen-eyed young Scotchman, who knows "whom he has believed," who preaches with trumpet blast of conviction, who has but one purpose in life, to preach the judgments and the saving love of God in Christ. Ah! now see the church grow. See a new respect for the Sabbath appear, and a new basis for all the moral life of the community.

In the next eighteen years Silas McKeen thoroughly mingled his personality with the life of the town, 160 members had been added and the church was evidently making good as a power in the community. Now comes a call in 1832 from the church in Belfast, Maine for Bradford's pastor, and he wisely gives the church a "change of feed," by accepting the call. The chief event of the next ten years is the removal of the church building from the upper plain to the spot where we worship tonight. The framework of the old church was set up and clothed with a new and improved exterior.

In 1842 a very rare thing took place. Former pastor McKeen was

recalled "with great unanimity," to take up the work which he had once laid down. One more splendid course of twenty-four years rounded out an aggregate pastorate of forty-three years.

In this period grew up the burning question which reached every hamlet, which swept with its billows of debate and rising passion from the platform on which Lincoln and Douglas faced each other to the boards of Faneuil Hall, the great question of the extension or extinction of slavery. The voice of Silas McKeen gave no uncertain sound, this community held loyal, and on Sabbath afternoon, April 28, 1861 there faced the minister a company of Bradford young men in the uniform of their country pledged to serve with the rifle the cause of union and the extinction of slavery. With a great congregation of their fellow citizens and loved ones, they heard the message of this church to the departing soldiers. The text was II Samuel, 10:12, "Be of good courage and let us play the men, for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth Him good." Bradford has passed few hours more thrilling than that, when at the altar of God her soldier sons were warned to self-control, to unflinching courage, and reminded that the event was in the hands of a just God. On the following Thursday the Bradford company entrained for the front. The following communicant members of this church served as soldiers in the civil war: Roswell Farnham, Horace McDuffee, Louis Child, Elijah Farr, David Cobb, Jesse Warren, Horace Renfrew, Henry T. Barnard, Daniel Flanders, Dwight Clark.

In 1866, on account of advancing years, Dr. McKeen resigned and until his death in 1877 became a worshipper with his people, while younger men took up the pastorate. He was a hard student of the Scriptures; a Calvinist of the most distinct type, and his preaching bred in men a rugged sense of personal responsibility to God.

In large part his theology was of the sternest mediaeval kind, but in his later years, those who knew him tell me his spirit was mellowed and sweetened by the all-prevailing truth of God's love. In looking over his sermons I came across a flash of humor also, which shows that his was an entirely human spirit, very much in contact with the practical realities of every-day life.

To the tune of,

"Day of all the week the best
Emblem of eternal rest."

he has put these words, entitled
"Monday":

"Day of all the week the worst
Day with baleful washing curst,
Cease to spoil the women's faces,
But spare, oh spare, their Christian graces."

To the hundreds in this valley whom he baptized, married, led into the Kingdom of God, and attended to their final rest, he became indeed "the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land."

I have spoken much of this patriarchal minister, whose service towers head and shoulders above that of the rest of us who served in this holy office, but the mosaic of the century demands generous mention of the labor of thirteen pastors who stand with him in the ranks of this service. As far as can be determined, their roll and the years of their accession are as follows: Charles Calkins, 1810; Clement Parker—, Silas McKeen, 1814; George W.

Campbell, 1833; John Suddard—, Cephas Kent, 1837; Silas McKeen, 1842; John K. Williams, 1866; Lester H. Elliott, 1875, Allan Clark, 1880; John W. Lees, 1885; Henry T. Barnard, 1894; Henry J. Kilbourn, 1899; Charles E. Morse, 1907; Nicholas F. Stahl, 1908.

Each man of these has brought an honest and an earnest energy to the work of this church. Each has prepared the way of the Lord, and for each is laid up an unfailing reward by our great Employer for the work which he did here. I count it an honor to be of your number, and we can only pray that the accumulated spiritual interest of our days spent here may be a silent but powerful help to the community and to the Kingdom of God in all days to come. "Establish Thou the work of our hands upon us. Yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it."

I can find but four years in the past hundred when there have not been accessions to the church. It is of interest to note that the years of the largest addition to the membership were immediately following the return of Dr. McKeen from a short absence in 1828, when 22 united; 1831, when the tide rose higher, 32 uniting; 1837, immediately after the removal of the edifice from the upper plain to this spot, when there came the largest ingathering of any single year in our history, 57. The next largest year of accessions was 1867, when John K. Williams took up the work just laid down by Dr. McKeen and gathered in 52 new members. The grand total of members from June 24, 1810 to June 24, 1910 is 822.

In 1876 was finished the present house of worship at a cost of \$15,600 the culmination of years of planning and sacrificing toil on the part of

women as well as men, the Ladies' Aid Society finishing the vestry at a cost of \$2,800, furnishing the church at an expense of \$2,700, and afterward purchasing the organ at a cost of \$1,200.

The growing strength of the church called into being the following organizations: the Congregational Society, March 16, 1814, consisting of the financial contributors to the church; the church Edifice Society, 1875, an organization of the pew holders in the present edifice, and which owns and has charge of the building; the Christian Endeavor Society, 1887, one of the early responses to the epoch-making work of "Father Endeavor" Clark; the present Ladies' Society, formed in 1889, but which is the daughter of a previous Ladies' Society that for many years labored for the material welfare of the church with a devotion which can well be emulated by the younger generation; the Women's Union, 1900, which embraces the Home and Foreign Mission and local benevolent work of the women of the church.

Loyal friends among the townspeople have given many costly and beautiful gifts to the church, among which should be remembered its first silver communion service, by Capt. William Trotter, and its present beautiful individual communion service, the gift of Mrs. David Blakely; the parsonage property and church bell by Mr. Timothy Ayer, Jr.; two silver communion plates by Dea W. E. Norcross; \$1000 by Mr. Johnson A. Hardy; \$100 by Miss Lucy Brewster; \$500 by Miss Betsy Ayer; \$500 by Miss Abbie Wright; \$486 by Dea. John Sawyer; one-half the amount of the church debt in 1891 by Mr. David Blakely; \$3000 by Mrs. Amanda Sawyer; \$5000 by Dr. D. K. Pearsons;

\$5000 by Mr. Edw. C. Sawyer; \$400 by Mr. Israel Willard; and \$200 by Miss Philena McKeen; Bible by Mrs. H. B. Stevens; Desk Bible by J. B. W. Prichard and wife; Tower Clock to Church Society by C. P. Corliss.

The church holds over \$12,000 of invested funds today. Here I am going to mingle with my task of the historian a note of the prophet: many churches in New England, notably in Vermont, have been the recipients of large endowments. A noble purpose prompted these endowments. Men and women, prosperous in this world's goods, have desired that their lives should be perpetuated in the work of saving men, building the Kingdom. But it is growing to be common knowledge that in the majority of cases where these gifts have been made unconditional upon any effort by the church, the result has been a distinct letting-down in the sense of responsibility by the churches so aided. They have found it harder and harder to produce from the members a just amount for benevolence and missions, and even for the pastor's salary. A certain New England church received from a devoted friend whose boyhood had been spent in that church an endowment which produced interest sufficient to pay the entire salary of the pastor. The immediate result was that practically the entire membership of the church declined to pay anything farther toward the salary and, still more seriously, the offerings apportioned to the church for benevolence and missions fell off about 50 per cent. This means spiritual poverty. It means sapping the very roots of Christian living. My conviction is, that those who would really strengthen our churches by gifts must

begin to make further gifts conditional upon a certain amount of effort by the people of the church. Take out the need of individual giving, and you have injected into the church a spiritual cocaine. You remember how one of the early popes, throwing open the door of a vault containing the fabulous monies of the Vatican in that day, said to a plain monk with a smile, "You see the day has passed when the church must say, 'Gold and silver have I none.'" "Yes," replied the plain monk, "and the day has passed when the church can say, 'Rise up and walk!'" All the voices of those who have struggled in the past century call upon you not to make this the day of ease. To that end every member should feel it a matter of personal pride to take his or her financial part, however humble, in the church expenses, and in raising the apportioned amount for this church in the benevolences whereby our Congregational regiment is fighting the battle of God's Kingdom in other cities and other lands.

Enough of money. The wealth of our church, we will all agree, is not in mortgages and bank pass-books. It is in lives of integrity and power, sent out from the church as from the hand of a mother, to do a faithful day's work in the world, to increase the volume of the world's faith in God, in man, and its mystic but glorious thirst for eternal life. Many such lives has this church produced. The story of them would be well worth the telling if it were possible. I name but two.

Gov. Roswell Farnham joined this church in 1854 and was for fifty years its faithful and consistent member. For the largest part of that time he was clerk of the church and

a teacher in the Sunday School. Those who met and honored him in the many affairs of his widely interested life as a lawyer, a soldier, and governor of our commonwealth probably little realized how the springs of that life were fed by communion of his God, service of his Master. Others delight to tell of the Lieutenant-Colonel of the Twelfth Regiment instructing his brave wife in their tent at the front to lie upon the tent floor as the artillery began to play upon their position, then riding away to take his post in the lead of his faithful Vermonters, who were wont to nudge each other and say, "Now we're all right, there's Farnham in command"; to tell of his able and spotless administration of the State's affairs at Montpelier, of his life as a scholar and lawyer. I love to tell, also, how a Bradford juryman, during an exciting term of court in Chelsea, missing him in the evening, traced him to his room in the hotel, knocked and entering, found the Governor with a large old Bible spread upon his knees—his soul windows open toward Jerusalem. I love to tell how, after I had delivered the Memorial Day address, while he was lying at home in that closing weariness of his life, when the veterans had marched home and the sounds of fife and drum had died away, I sought his bedside. How keenly he missed taking his place with his comrades that day!—and would the pastor offer a prayer? At its close came like a benediction from the lips of the Christian soldier a fervent "Amen and amen."

The church as well as the community is also wealthy in the life of a long-ago boy in our Sunday

School, whose parents were communicants of the church. The life of that mother has left in this community a fragrance that years only increase. Breathing into their son the spirit and courage of their own Christian characters, they sent him away to serve in his country's navy. The histories delight to tell how the "Oregon," a white eagle of war, under his command sailed two oceans and struck her blow to make free an oppressed people. I like, also, to tell how Admiral Charles E. Clark idolizes the memory of his Christian mother, and how well his brave, clean life carries out her teachings.

Lives! lives! lives! Do you hear the great Head of the church calling upon the church to produce Him lives?

The church of today faces giant issues. The phrase, "the social unrest" has a kind of dim, far-off sound here where the hills look down with their eternal "benedicite"—but the cities are seething with a vengeful cry that those who work the hardest are not getting the just reward of their toil-spent lives. "Get the rich man's money away from him!" some shout, "and divide it evenly among all those who produce it!" To divide the world's money between the capitalist and the laborer is a task that calls for men, scientific experts, to be sure, but back of them for Christian men whom the church must produce, to blaze the way and then lead the way to a Christian division of the money among the people. The church must also really know the laborer and his conditions, must really concern herself with his welfare. Keen young lives, brought up in this valley, must be trained in the

church as well as the school to go out into the seething social unrest and bring its violent spirit to patience and to reason and to love.

No spiritual movement in this generation compares in importance with the missionary awakening of this year 1910. Presidents, kings, emperors are at last recognizing the missionary and the leadership of Jesus Christ in bringing the coming world-peace, the "Parliament of Man." The laymen's missionary movement has already furnished the money for an immense increase of Christian workers and institutions in all the foreign lands. The World's Missionary Conference is even now being held in Edinburg, mapping out what is to be a general movement of the host of God upon the cities of the nations. Only one thing now is needed—lives! Young men and women who will thoroughly fit themselves for positions of service as Christian preachers, Christian teachers, Christian physical directors, Christian musical directors, Christian instructors in manual training and trade schools, physician-missionaries and hospital nurses.

Mind you, this is to be no life of ease. There's the tang of danger in it all, but if a young man wants to make his life tell widely and deeply upon his fellow-men, let him now forsake the overcrowded professional and business ranks at home, let him step out on the missionary firing line and taste life and do a little nation-building.

O church, with your honorable hundred years and invested funds behind you, call once more to these young lives in the voice of Jesus, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Pray and plan that one day, not

too distant, a member of this church shall represent you as a messenger of Christ on the foreign field.



JOSEPH TEBBETTS

Chorister for Nearly Thirty Years

By making every man conscious that he is a citizen of two worlds, by showing men how to realize the vision of the Revelator: "I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of Heaven," to be planted here in larger and larger sections; by making the hearts of young men and women burn again, as they have in past

days, for Christian character and Christian service, you will crown the prayers, the toil and the best hopes of the fathers, you will fulfil a great part of the high purpose for which God put this church in this place.

"Over the spot where mired we
struggle now
Shall march in triumph a trans-
figured race.
They shall exult where weary we
have wept,
They shall achieve where we have
striven in vain.

"Leaping in vigor where we faintly
crept,
Joyous along the road we paved with
pain.
What though we seem to sink in the
morass?
Under those unborn feet our dust
shall sing,
When o'er our failure perfect they
shall pass.
Forth, and make a firm highway for
the King!"

Sources Consulted.

The record books of "The Calvinistic Congregational Church of Christ in Bradford;" Vol. 1864, Page 327, Congregational Quarterly; History of Bradford by Silas McKee; Paper, "History of Bradford Churches" by Myra Burbeck Johnson; and a number of individuals who have kindly aided with information.

GREETINGS

REV. J. W. LEE'S INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNION SERVICE.

The communion service is at once the most serious and interesting observance of our religious life, as it brings us personally in contact with the author of our faith.

His invitation is, "This do in remembrance of me." That is why we observe it. We are here by Christ's own special appointment.

In a service that is memorial in its character, as this occasion is, it is particularly fitting that we begin that service by first meeting the Lord himself, recognizing His own true place at the head of the church.

In entering the temple for the old Jewish service in Jerusalem, one met first the altar of sacrifice, than the rest of the service followed in its natural order until one came to the Holy of Holies. So here, we meet first the Cross of Christ, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. In this place Christ said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Thus we find He is the light of the world itself; He is the bread of life; He is the final word of God; and at last we enter into the Holy of Holies, never more to go out.

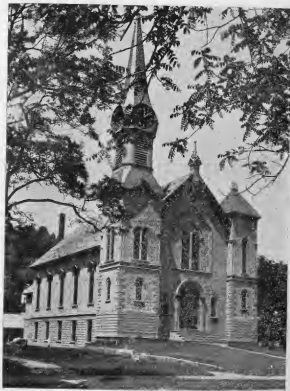
In no other service of the church do we find so many of its members, past and present, as we do upon this occasion, for it is in memory of all its hundred years, and includes all who ever did belong to the church. As it brings us into the presence of Him, who "was dead, and is alive again," we have one present who said, "None are dead to God"; who also said, "He that believeth in me shall never die"; and so He that ever liveth, and the memory of those who never die, and we that remain, are one in this singular service, which throws light upon the words, "This is the new and living way." When, therefore, we do this in remembrance of Christ, we do it not only in remembrance of His death, but in remembrance of all He was and is in all respects.

Jesus has been the life-long friend of this church. It is a great testimony of His continued interest in it that it has endured all these years, that its doors have never been shut to the public, and

that during these years, all the way along, new members have been coming into it; members who were born again. In no feature of the church's usefulness is there any better testimony that Christ is with you than in the conversion of those about you who came gradually to take your place in the church as you in your time have taken the place of those preceding you, and so its life and usefulness has been continued to the present.

This church is common with all the other Christ-loving people is one of the agencies of God to perpetuate the remembrance of Christ, and to publish His death and His new covenant among men. "To do this in remembrance of Christ" so far away from that upper room where it was first instituted and in this age so remote from that day, is in itself a striking proof that you are in vital touch with the everlasting son of God. The vitality of your present relation to Him, the wonderful persistence in which His command to commune with Him is still observed, so that He gathers about Him the most intelligent and worthy of the race throughout the world, the wonderful expanding energies that follow His leading, and the constant finding of new places to centralize His memory and work, all show the character of Him who is the Head of the Church.

The personal element is, of course, the most interesting feature of church life, for it is in that that we find our own relation to Christ in the church. As the Psalmist says, "Oh, God thou art my God," so we can say, "Oh, Christ thou art my Christ." There is an isolation of the human soul as it sits at the communion table which is not felt at any other service. The matter of each soul is a personal one between that soul and the supreme Lord and Saviour. We are in the presence of One who forgives sin, who at last presents the soul, that has elected Him to be its Saviour, absolutely redeemed, "Holy without blemish and unreprouvable before God, if so be that we continue in the faith grounded and steadfast." Not only are we privileged to leave all our sins with Christ at such a time, but we are asked to leave all our burdens with Him "for He careth for you" to go forth into life's



Congregational Church, Bradford, Vt.

service with a new and strong step to meet all emergencies of life.

At the close of these many years, as we come to this communion table, we find that the great majority of its members have gone to their reward. It is sixteen years and a half since I last communed with you in this church. I see many absent faces here as we remember our Lord's death. I do not see it in any sad light, for, as Dwight L. Moody said, when dying, "There is no dark valley here," since He in whom we believe said, "I will come again, and where I am, there may ye be also."

In common with all your pastors, past and present, I commend you to the ever-loving and patient Saviour in whose memory we meet—some of us for the last time until we drink of the cup anew in Christ's visible presence.

GREETING REV. C. H. MERRILL.

The church we meet with today is one of the last to be established in this lower Coos Valley. Doubtless our historian this evening will give us the reasons for the delay. Forty-six years before, nearly one half a century, the neighboring church on the North, Newbury, has been established jointly with the church in Haverhill across the river. This was the second in the territory which afterward became the State of Vermont. The church in Bennington antedating it by only two years. It is interesting to note the group of churches prepared to welcome this new organization into fellowship. The next in age following Newbury was Orfordville organized in 1770, and the year following were added Piermont, Lyme, Hanover and Hanover Center. Then came Thetford in 1773, soon one of the strongest and most famous in this vicinity under the leadership of Dr. Burton, author of the "Taste Scheme" and head virtually of a theological seminary in his own study. Later came Vershire, 1787, while in 1790 Haverhill separated from Newbury and started an independent existence. These with West Fairlee, 1809, may be taken to be the group of churches naturally forming the council to welcome this new organization into fellowship. At this time there were in the upper Coos Valley another group, Lancaster, 1794, Guildhall, 1799, Lunenburg, 1802, and Littleton, 1803. While over in Caledonia county, along the old stage road on the ridge, were Danville and Peacham, and in valleys of the

Passumpsic and the Connecticut, Waterford and St. Johnsbury.

It is a little surprising that on this beautiful site on the lower part of these interval meadows so early settled, the organization of a church should have been so long delayed. But once started it has had a vigorous existence, and the end of a century finds it well among the first of its fellowship. This region bears the distinction with other parts of the Connecticut Valley of never having been visited by the early itinerant missionaries. The Connecticut immigrants which came into the State in such numbers as to give it for a time the name New Connecticut found their way largely to the western side and the Champlain Valley. And when their ministers followed them to look after their spiritual interests, and shortly formed the first State Missionary Society, the region of operations was chiefly in the west and north. So far as I can find the itineraries of their early missionaries never came nearer this region than Montpelier and the western part of Orange county on the west, and Waterford and St. Johnsbury on the north. The only part which this region had in this work was that of contributing churches to the support of the society, and the leading influence of Dr. Burton on the board of officers.

One other matter may be spoken of to the credit of this group of churches. In each one of these with few exceptions, there has been a pastor of long service and commanding influence whose personality has been felt far beyond the bounds of his parish. I have already spoken of Dr. Burton, and I need only mention the names of Fuller of Vershire, Martin of West Fairlee, Tenny of Lyme, and foremost among all ranking well up with Dr. Burton and Tenny, the name of Dr. McKeen of this church. It was my good fortune to remember him as a lad when he exchanged with the pastor in Haverhill, and I recall his impressive manner in the pulpit, his husky voice, his carefully written address, and the traditions of his scholarship. While afterwards I met him in his attendance upon worship in the old house here after his retirement, and witnessed the honor in which he was held among by the people in his old age.

It is a worthy church with traditions characteristic of our order to which I bring greetings this day from the goodly fellowship of our 214 churches in this commonwealth. Never were the number of our churches greater, never was the

membership larger, and material resources more ample. To you and to us all may the blessing of the Lord with all needed spiritual gifts be aded that we may be fully furnished for the years to come.

GREETINGS FROM NEIGHBORING CHURCHES.

REV. CHARLES H. SHANK, NEWBURY.
MY DEAR BRETHREN:

I suppose we are all agreed that it is splendid to grow old, if our growth is in the way of goodness, for then we are able to give to the world a reason for our existence. Any church a hundred years old has certainly, upon many occasions, proven its right to existence and life. Therefore, your brethren of the First Congregational Church in Newbury, rejoice to bring you Christian greetings, and hearty congratulations on this important day of your life, for as a church you have honored our Lord and Master through the most wonderful century of history.

The splendid ministry of this church has been a great blessing and inspiration to all who have come under its influence, for here men and women have been coming up to the house of God that they might "worship Him in spirit and in truth"; because they have felt the need, in common with all the race, to come into touch with the highest and best things of life, and thus become prepared for the greater joys of the "more abundant life."

At times, and especially upon occasions like this, I can not help but think of the fathers and mothers in Isreal, who have come here for worship and spiritual edification, most of whom have long ago received the "crown of life," by virtue of their having "kept the faith." I think of the genuine piety that filled their lives, and of the fervent prayers they offered for the conversion of man, and for the peace and prosperity of the church. And I think their prayers for this particular church have been answered,—“for more things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of,”—to the extent, at least, that it has had such a long history and great opportunity. Your fathers, and you, their children, who worship here, love the church, because through it salvation is proclaimed; and because God, by the great sacrifice of His Son, established it. They could sing with much heart fervor, the old hymn written by President Dwight, of Yale, ten years before the organization of this church:

"I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode,
The church our blest Redeemer saved,
With His own precious blood."

You, the present members of the church, feel a strong attachment to it, because of what it has done for Christ and Bradford during these hundred years. A church a century old is far more than simply an idea; it is a mighty blessing to the community. Think of the many in sorrow to whom this church has brought light, peace and comfort; and the many in sin to whom it has brought help and inspiration for the better life, until "faith, hope and love," bound them as by a triple cord, to their Father in heaven. Then, I also think of the church as the only regenerative power in the community, upon which we can depend with any certainty, for the future happiness of the people.

If the people of any locality neglect the church until it dies, what is left to bring salvation to that community? I am quite sure that intellectual, moral and spiritual retrogression, would, in time, be the inevitable result of such a deplorable condition. Education alone can not do it, though some people talk as if the school alone pointed the way to Utopia.

For example, take Bradford, "beautiful for situation," so far as things intellectual are concerned; for here in the Connecticut valley, it is said, we have more preparatory schools and colleges, than in any other similar territory in the country, and perhaps the world. But is this fact all we desire for our boys and girls? Separate man from the high ethical and spiritual life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and it only makes him a greater expert as a transgressor. Philosophy and science, and all education and wealth, can never take the place of God's truth to man, of which the church is the herald. In this materialistic age, the church exalts man's spiritual needs, and amid all conflicting speculations of the present, still points out the true way of life. It defines real manhood, and becomes the school for the human soul. It aims at nothing less than the "perfect man in Christ Jesus," and feels that in Him only are we complete. So we, your brethren, come to you to-day, rejoicing in the longevity and prosperity of the church here in Bradford, and in the great work you and your fathers have done during these hundred years of splendid history. I am glad, therefore, as the pastor and a representative of the oldest

church in Orange County, and the second oldest in Vermont, to bring to you, the brethren and friends of this church, our fraternal and kindly greetings; and as your near neighbor on the North, we wish for you, and Dr. Stahl, your present pastor, as well as all the future pastors and members of this church, every possible success for the remaining centuries of your history.

REV. DONALD FRASER, WELLS RIVER.

Permit me to bring you first the old apostolic greeting. "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth and, not I only, but also all they that have known the truth. For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us and shall be with us forever. Grace be with you, mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father in truth and love. I rejoice greatly that I found thy children walking in truth as we have received a commandment of the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee but that which we had from the beginning that we love one another and this is love that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment. That as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. I trust to come unto you and speak face to face that our joy may be full. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen."

A hundred years is not a long period in the history of civilization. There are civilizations which reach into the thousands of years. Religion itself is older than all the records of the oldest civilization. Your glory then is not your antiquity. You belong to a very modern church. The venerable church of the East and the church of the West which still rules in power from Rome can look on our Puritan communion as one would regard a very young and somewhat wayward child.

This church does not, as I take it, celebrate its centennial that she may reiterate the past. The way that you have gone you shall go no more forever.

From the past we receive noble inspirations and an impulse more powerful than any words can express, but it is an impulse towards the future. Our church conceives of Christianity as a movement outwards. This movement will express

itself in two forms but it is essentially the same movement outward.

I. It will move out to the community. The danger of a Church, especially a Church with rich traditions, is to become a circle rather than a center. We abide too much within our walls. The new Jerusalem, the Church of the prophetic vision has no walls. It represents the Redeeming power of the whole community. It is a reservoir of the Water of Life for every soul that is athirst. It is the source of an ever widening and deepening stream of social and civic righteousness. It exists to redress all the needs of men. There are certain within our Church who would confine its energies to harmless prayers, psalms and preaching. They desire the pastor to lift his feet and plant them down firmly on the same spot. They are scandalized at any attempt to march. They take offerings for the poor, but they do not truly desire the poor in their pew. They love panegyrics of Righteousness until Righteousness touches Business or Politics or Society, until it becomes practical and has some real issue. They love to hear an eloquent sermon on Righteousness flowing over the whole world.

But if the pastor attempts to give Bradford a bath some will say the water is too cold and more will say it is too hot and most people will agree it was injudicious to say the least. They will say that it bordered on personality and that is the wickedest heresy of all. Calvin's grand ideal was to make the city of Geneva into a church but our ideal today is to make our church a conscience and a heart for the city. The most fatal policy a Church can pursue is to allow either the poverty or the wealth of the community to ignore its presence. We are afraid to lose our deacons and our contributors and so they die out and the Church is left to subsist on their meagre funeral fees. The fault with our modern Congregational church is that we are not making inroads into the enemies' territory. We are not adding converts as we should, we are not gaining members where we might. We are afraid if Smith comes in Jones will go out. We don't want Jones to go out but it is our business to gather to Christ his own without respect of persons or conditions.

II. The other outward movement which has languished in many of our churches is the movement towards the conquest of the world for Christ. If a young man

or woman purposed in their heart to leave home and kindred and go out to the frontiers of the Christian advance, his friends in the Church would seriously doubt his mental balance. A man who discharges his obligations to the great Commission of the Church "Go ye out and disciple the nations by subscribing for one year one-fourth or one-third of his daily wage" has a very accommodating conscience. Your automobile dollar subscriber can scarcely be considered an enthusiastic believer in Christ. There is something seriously wrong in our churches which stand apathetic to the great forward march of the forces led by Christ Himself for the redemption of all nations. Many men and women cannot reasonably be expected to offer themselves for the most glorious of all causes in such an atmosphere of cold blooded apathy. Our meagre offerings to the benevolences of our Faith are begging the glory of Christ in the eyes of the rising generation. Lest I might commit the heresy of personality, I took the precaution of not knowing how this church gave to the great missionary causes with which the highest glory of our Congregational church is connected.

This must in the very nature of the case be a time for adulation and relying upon that I venture to repeat to you the warning which the late Alexander MacLaren of Manchester gave to our powerful United Free Church in Scotland. "Let us beware lest we sacrifice to our own net and offer incense to our drag." But there is something worse than that and it is sacrificing to our boat when we have given up casting the net and using the drag.

A church that has weathered the storms and changes of one hundred years must have had strong men and women in her membership and noble men in her ministry. My prayer for you is not that you may now reach the harbour, but rather that emboldened by your past and its triumphs, you may face the open and sail the seas with God.

I bring you the hearty congratulations and greetings of the Wells River church.

REV. JOHN IRONS, HAVERHILL.

It is a great pleasure for me on behalf of the church in Haverhill to congratulate our sister church in Bradford on the completion of the hundredth year of her life.

The church of Christ does not merely survive after nineteen centuries of ex-

istence in the world. It is a fact that today her roots are set more deeply in the world's life and the spread of her branches is wider than ever before during all that time. The impress of the civilization for which she is responsible, and to which she has given her name is more deeply manifest than ever and what is more it is still being put upon new peoples in our own generation. The virility of her life, the wholeness of it, its staying qualities, are beyond question.

To this last fact the occasion of our gathering today strongly attests. That an institution should continuously exist for a century in a particular community and at the end of it be found healthy and thrifty and honored, argues for it the best of all rights to live for the highest of all reasons, that of permanent usefulness. Your church, brethren, must have served well this community through the last century, else we would not be here today. She must have proved her usefulness, her divine right to live. I need not add that in any real church of Christ that spirit of usefulness is inherent, and that it touches the community life at its deepest and most potent and permeative source.

One learns to read character in the face of a community as he does in the face of a person. There are places even in good old Vermont into which I would hesitate to recommend a man with a family of children to go to live. I should doubt the probability of his being able to rear them there free from moral taint. And the natural setting of them may be quite as beautiful as that of Bradford, which is saying not a little. But you don't find in those places thrifty well-kept homes around thrifty well-kept churches. That combination argues well for the atmosphere of a place. It may seem paradoxical, yet I think it is true, that the marks of community degeneracy are apt to show first in the neighborhood of the church.

Speaking of Vermont, it is an interesting fact that this year for the first time can it be said that fully half the churches of the State have reached the century mark. If the year book and my figuring can be trusted, last year of the two hundred and thirteen churches, one hundred and six were a century or more old. This year Bradford and Coventry pass into that class and in doing so make it the majority a hundred and eight century old churches and a hundred and five under the century. And this fact, that fully half the Congregational churches of the State have a

century or more of history behind them, is it not a fact of some significance? Was it not something to say in the interpretation of the history of the State? If Vermont has a reputation for independence, for sanity and level-headedness, for conservative progressiveness, has not this fact something to do with it? I believe much.

On behalf of the Haverhill church then, and coming from the sister State, I heartily greet and congratulate the church in Bradford on joining this order of ancient and honorable churches, and bid her God-speed as she starts on the second century of her life. May the accumulation of years mean always to her accumulated power, power to serve well the Lord of the Kingdom and Bradford.

REV. A. R. CREWE, PIERMONT.

DEAR DR. STAHL AND MEMBERS OF BRADFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH:

In the name of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, of which I am a member, I greet you. It is fitting it should be so. Your religious title is very English—"Congregationalists." As such your history is glorious, it dates back to a remarkable period in English history, 1567, when the first Congregational church was founded.

It is worthy of note that Congregationalism and Bradford are synonymous, since William Bradford, of Scrooby, England, afterwards governor of Plymouth, Mass., whose name your town bears, was a man who exemplified in his life the highest principles of Congregationalism. In the name of the Piermont Congregational Church, we greet you. Like the Magi, we have come from the East, the place of wisdom and antiquity. We bow before your shrine, we reverence your old age. A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind. While you are as a Father in Israel, you must reckon us as a grandfather. You are a hundred years old—we are a hundred and twenty-five years of age. If you have reached such proportions at a hundred, what will be your stature at one hundred and twenty-five. We have journeyed from East to West, so we use the Western salutation, "Grace be unto you." We offer this in its comprehensive sense, grace, mother of all the graces. It represents our love, yet more than our love. Love with a plus. We gladly cast this, our wreath, before your centennial monument, and trust you may continue to spread light and blessing in this town of Bradford.

It will be so if your church is true to her ideals. The standard obtained is ever in proportion to the ideal entertained. The church that does not cherish the ideal will die. A church is something spiritual, something independent of time and conditions, a bond which holds us together, and should make us one, in all the relationships of life, human and divine.

Our fellowship is with the human and divine. We are perfected in union and communion. If we are true to a noble ancestry, we shall quibble less about orthodoxy of mind, while we develop orthodoxy of heart.

Lives of good men, all remind us

We may make our lives sublime,

And, departing, leave behind us

Foot-prints on the sands of time.

In the presence of growing tasks, lift up your hearts unto the Lord. We have not had His best yet. There are mountains to be scaled, glorious visions await us. Let us wait for the vision, then wed vision to deed, and enter the new era by a renewed act of consecration to Him.

REV. C. C. PARKER, FAIRLEE.

The establishing of every new Christian church is a cause of rejoicing. Far more the cause of rejoicing for the people of God, is the time when that church can say, "I have for 100 years carried on the mission for which I was sent." The Spirit of the Church is always of benevolence and sympathy for mankind. For 100 years the power of grace and the march of truth has gone on. For a century the victories for the Son of God have continually taken place. During the century which is just passed the floodgates of Divine love have never once been closed. Our church at Fairlee rejoices the more with you today because the vital principal of Christianity is still alive and fresh and more vigorous than ever before and that your watchword is still "Onward."

One hundred years ago, a company of men and women bound themselves together in ties stronger than death, and the bonds have never been broken.

The Church is the family of Christ where the young and the elderly, the high and the lowly, the learned and the unlearned are associated and bound together. Fraternal lodges have their obligations, but here is a tie stronger than the obligations of any secret order, a pledge to follow our Lord and Master. When joy comes to one of the household, all rejoice;

when one is in grief, all feel for that one; when one is in trouble, every hand is a brother's, extended to help. Christ is our foundation and our creed is "Love."

During the past century of life, how many children have gone from this household into life's battles into all parts of the land, that look back and bless the church that brought them from death unto life, that lifted them from darkness to the marvelous light. How many a soul has watched this load star in the troubled waves of life and through its guidance they were guided rightly.

How many a one lost in the sea of strife have looked to this beacon light and have come into port safe. Surely you have cause to rejoice as you review the past, and we rejoice with you.

Since 1810 the gospel of Christ has ever been proclaimed from this desk and the "Whosoever will" has been held forth. The door has been opened which no man can shut. The sexton and the pastor may hold the key to this beautiful house of worship, but God Himself holds the key to the living church.

Again we rejoice in your beautiful house of worship and your commodious parsonage which you from time to time have changed and remodelled to suit your requirements. We rejoice with you in the Godly men that have served you as pastors during these years. And above all else, we rejoice that God has not had cause to remove this Candle from its place.

May your faith never wane, may your altar fires never cease, may this door of love and mercy ever be kept ajar and the gospel invitation ever be held out until every nation kindred and tongue shall bow to and reverence that name held high over all, the name of our blessed Jesus.

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REV. WILLIAM SLADE, THETFORD.

I represent here to-day the old church on Thetford Hill, founded in the year 1773. We are worshipping in a church building erected in 1787 which is the oldest church building in the State of Vermont that has been in continuous use. I represent also a church more than a hundred years younger, the church at North Thetford, organized in 1878. This is a descendant of the old church on the Hill.

Speaking for these churches, I say that we congratulate this church on having the self-respect and affection which bade it keep its hundredth birthday with grat-

itude and joy. The churches of our day do not realize, as they ought, their dignity and worth, nor comprehend the contribution the churches have made to the welfare of the community and the spiritual life of men and women. The church gets its worth in being the embodiment of Christ—not being that, it fails to be a church. Her honor is in being the living Instrument and Institution for building the Kingdom of God in the world. No other institution is so directly related to that great end which we are to seek first and always. The church has her task to inspire the home, to train the conscience of the citizen, to guide industry by Christian principles and pleasure by Christian ideals. She is the salt of the earth, she is the pillar of the truth.

Why then should she not celebrate her birthdays and reconsecrate herself to Christ and His Kingdom?

Representing these churches, I welcome the opportunity to express that fellowship which has grown altogether too cold and ceremonious in this valley among the Congregational churches. Independence is in danger of being its own undoing. To-day all combine, co-ordinate and confer, but the Congregational churches. In this era of co-operation and practical brotherhood, we are in danger of losing sight of each other in a little private life of our own which may grow conceited, weak and unchristian, if we do not know and love each other better, and work together for ends beyond the narrow limits of our own parishes.

It will not, I think, be out of place at this time to bring our greetings and congratulations to the laymen of this church, who feeling in advance, the laymen's movement, organized the Bradford Brotherhood. It is a sign of the times most encouraging and hopeful, when men feel the call to a unity of religious and patriotic feeling and action. The laymen are destined to bear us above the denominational and ecclesiastical, to a level of Christian unity and Christian service not reached before. If the Congregational church stands for democracy, she stands above all, for the development and employment of the layman. He must serve as Christian business man and citizen to bring in the new life of the world or it will not come.

Therefore, I greet you in behalf of the high calling of the church, past, present and future. I offer you the good will and fellowship of sister churches and con-

gratulate the laymen, men and women, on being the mainstay of the church in the past, and our hope and confidence for the future.

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REV. E. A. LEGG, BRADFORD.

I am gratified at the introduction which is given me upon the program as the pastor of your sister church. We have as great a right to claim the sisterly relation with you as you have with any church of your own denomination in as much as you are each absolutely independent. This relationship has existed between the two churches of Bradford since cradle days. The Methodist church was formed in 1797 and all through the century gone by, the two societies have grown side by side, learning the lessons of life and establishing themselves as powers in the community. Each has depended upon the other for its success. We recognize that if Grace church has been able under God's guidance to send out from her membership twenty two young men as preachers into the world, it has not been in and through her existence alone, but the Godly influence and character of this church in the community has had much to do with such success.

Now you have come to the celebration of your hundredth birthday anniversary. It is usually thought that a maiden is rather shy about receiving birthday congratulations after reaching a certain age and as you are not really old as Brother Fraser has already pointed out, let us look back upon this occasion as the commencement season of a young woman who having closed the old text books and forsaking the early school days, looks forward with bounding heart and exultant hopes to the greater work of life upon which she is about to enter.

Grace church brings to you these high wishes, that whatever you have accomplished in the past, whatsoever successes

have been yours, may prove to have been but dim forshadowings of the noble work yet to be done. We covet for you that only honor which a church of the Living God has a right to desire or expect to be known as a soul-winning church, a city of refuge to every oppressed, burdened and sin-sick heart. Every earthly accumulation and outward manifestation of wealth or prosperity are but the cheapest tinsel except they be used exclusively for the uplifting of God's Kingdom here in Bradford. We pray that your future leaders may always be given that divine wisdom which puts first things first and recognizes the mission of the church to men who are lost and undone.

We bring our congratulations today to the older members of this society who have borne the burden of its responsibilities and administration for years, who have toiled and labored through the varying shades of success that it might unfailingly minister to the needs of this community. We congratulate you upon having been members of a church whose history has been noble and whose place among churches of the State has been honored.

We bring our felicitations and the inspiration of our love and sympathy to the younger members of this church who are just beginning to bear the burdens and accept its precious charges. May the record of the past be to you a spur to dare anything for Christ's sake. May it roll upon you a divine passion for souls and find you never content until as God's messengers you are conscious of carrying the good news to those who have never heard and of seeing them born into the Kingdom of Light.

With these few words, we bid you God speed and involve those choicest blessings of heaven upon your labors, so long as the church endures shall and there be need upon earth of its ministry.



Organ and Chancel